## Lesson 25 - Selection And Storage Of Most Wholesome Foods, Part II


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- Article #1: Well! You Wanted To Know By V.V. Vetrano, B.S., D.C.




## 1. Vegetables

Vegetables are a very important part of an optimally nutritional diet, and can be the most enjoyable part of a meal if properly chosen and prepared.

Dr. Shelton says, "A large raw vegetable salad with each dinner is one of the most important elements of the diet. As a preventive of disease, it is far superior to all the vaccines and scrums ever devised."

Vegetables are anabolic (bodybuilding) foods, yet, unlike most protein foods, they are almost consistently alkaline in reaction, have very little fat and contain adequate amounts of dietary fiber.

Green leafy vegetables are the richest source of chlorophyll, as well as minerals and vitamins. They also contain small amounts of protein of high biological value, which is easier to assimilate than concentrated proteins.

A diet containing excessive amounts of protein and carbohydrates would not be nearly so harmful if balanced with a generous amount of vegetables.

Vegetables add variety to the menu and play an important role in the nutrition of humans.

## 1.1 How to Judge and Select Vegetables

**General Suggestions:**

1. Buy in season when quality is highest and prices lowest.
2. Don't buy more than you will use before they deteriorate. The sooner you use your vegetables, the more flavor and nutritional value they will contain.
3. Handle displayed vegetables carefully so you don't damage them for others.
4. Buy the freshest and best quality available—it will taste better, you will have less to discard and you will get more usable food for your money.

Vegetables are best when eaten immediately after they are picked from the garden. Try to at least grow

some of your own lettuce (many vegetables can even be grown in crates, if there is really no garden space available), or find someone in your area who can share with you. Green leafy vegetables are so important that it is worth going to some trouble to assure a supply of the best available. All vegetables have the most to offer nutritionally and have the best flavor when organically grown and eaten in the raw state immediately after harvesting. The more time that passes after harvesting, the more chemical changes occur which alter the nutritional composition and the taste.

Fresh vegetables are usually transported rapidly from field to market in chilled vans to keep them at maximum quality. If handled properly at the wholesale and retail levels, they can reach you in fairly good condition. Unlike fruit, the concern is freshness, not ripeness. It is incumbent upon you to learn to pick the freshest and best, and to reject poor quality vegetables that have been mishandled or that have just been on hand too long. Even when you must depend on conventional sources for your produce, you can become a wise, canny, selective, knowledgeable shopper, and you and your family and dinner guests will eat the best food available.

If it's fresh, it looks fresh—not wilted, wrinkled, drooping or otherwise blemished. The color should be characteristic of the variety. The degree of maturity is also important. Most vegetables are best when slightly immature; if large and mature, they are usually tough.

As with fruits, most of the vegetables available in the markets have been treated with heavy doses of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Washing can somewhat decrease those that remain on the outside surface, though nothing can remove the residues which are absorbed through the roots. Some vegetables can be peeled, but it is sad to have to remove the skin and thus lose the nutrients which lie immediately beneath it.

Some vegetables have their own protective coating, like podded peas and beans. Vegetables like lettuce can be washed only lightly to remove dirt and sand, and used "as is." Unless you grow your own, or obtain organically-grown vegetables, that's the best you can do. You will still be healthier and better nourished than nonvegetarians, and, as previously explained, chemical residues in the bodies of vegetarians are considerably lower than in the bodies of meateaters.

Some vegetables may also be waxed. Watch for the wax coatings on cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, parsnips and rutabagas. Either try to buy unwaxed vegetables, or peel them. If you must peel, don't cut too deeply. Try to discard only the thin skin. The greatest concentration of nutrients is just beneath the skin.

Red coloring may be added to sweet potatoes or to some new white potatoes. Don't buy colored vegetables.

Potatoes and onions are frequently treated with an anti-sprouting chemical. If the potatoes look fresh and good, and a few are showing signs of tiny sprouts, that would seem to indicate that they have not been treated. I pick those that are not sprouting, of course.

Tomatoes may be picked green and gassed in the van on the way to market. You can tell by the color and the taste. Tomatoes that were not picked prematurely will ripen to a deep-glowing red color, the flesh will not be mushy, and the taste will be superb.

If you locate a source of "organically grown" vegetables, check the source to try to find out if they really are as represented. Usually, there are certain indications, certain differences in appearance and taste. In any event, don't accept vegetables that are poor quality or old just because you have been assured they are organically grown.

Keep trying to find organically grown produce, but in the meantime these lessons can help you pick the freshest and best of what is seasonably available.

**Specific Varieties of Vegetables (alphabetically):**

**Artichokes, Globe (or French)**

Peak season is March through May. Artichokes are grown in California and, while they are shipped all through the year, they are best from March through May. This vegetable is usually cooked. Select firm, compact, tightly closed heads that are heavy in relation to size, with green, fresh-looking leaves. Size is not related to quality or flavor. You may sometimes find artichokes with frost discoloration on the outer leaves. The inner leaves are still good and unaffected. Reject artichokes with brownish soft spots near the stem or on leaf edges.

**Artichokes, Jerusalem (or ground)**

This plant has potato-like tubers which are delicious eaten raw. It is crisp and tastes a little like a fresh water chestnut. It also has a delicate flavor when cooked. Dr. Vetrano has expressed the opinion that the starch in Jerusalem artichokes is not readily absorbed by the body.

**Asparagus**

Peak season is March through June. Asparagus is usually cooked, but it is delicious raw. Select deep green, well-rounded spears with compact, tightly closed tips. The young slim tips are the most tender and best tasting. Avoid wilted, limp, flat or angular stalks. They are usually tough and stringy. Use asparagus as soon as possible; it is very perishable. Dr. Esser says the wild asparagus is a real delicacy. He also says that cultivated asparagus is the choicest of all spring vegetables and should be in every home garden. However, Dr. Burton has expressed the opinion that the fact that the eating of asparagus causes the urine to emit a foul odor, is indicative of this vegetable's unfavorable reaction in the body, and that he would recommend using it sparingly, if at all.

**Beans (Fresh)**

**Snap Beans (Green or Wax), Pole Beans, Italian String Beans**

Peak season is May through October, particularly June and July. Available all year, but of poor quality out of season. Select beans with both ends intact. They should have a pliable, velvety feel, not hard or tough. The color should be fresh and bright-looking and the pods should be young and snap easily. If they are limp and flexible, shriveled or dull, with brown rust spots and serious blemishes, don't buy them. Young snap beans are delicious raw.

**Fresh Podded Beans**

Lima or cranberry beans in the pod are sometimes available. Sometimes other podded beans are available, such as fava beans. Baby limas can be eaten raw. Mature limas, cranberry beans and fava beans have a rather tough skin, and are usually cooked. Cranberry beans are very easy to hull for cooking. Fresh podded beans require no soaking, and cook in half an hour or less. Select fresh-looking unblemished dry pods.

**Beets**

Peak season is June through August, but they are available all year. Small beets are young, sweet and tender and can be eaten raw. The roots should be firm with a smooth surface and dark red color. Wilted leaves indicate less freshness, but the bulbs, if firm, are still satisfactory.

The tops (leaves) are high in oxalic acid (like spinach) and it is not advisable to use them often. A few young tender leaves may be used in the salad. Remove the leaves as soon, as you get the beets home.

Allowing the leaves to wilt while still attached to the roots robs the roots of some nutritional value.

**Broccoli**

Peak season is October through May. The quality of broccoli available at other seasons is not as good. (Select firm stalks with dark green or purplish green compact clusters of buds, tightly closed and not on the verge of flowering. None of the buds should be opened enough to show the yellow flower. Stems should not be too thick or tough. Avoid buds that are spread, yellow or wilted. The leaves and tender buds may be eaten raw.

**Brussels sprouts**

Peak season is September through February. These look like miniature cabbages, but the raw flavor is not as good as that of sweet raw cabbage or broccoli. They can be eaten raw by chopping and mixing into the salad. Select tight, firm, unblemished heads with a bright green color, and no faded yellow soft or wilted leaves. If crisp and green, the outer leaves may be a little loose.

**Cabbage**

Available all year. Supply peaks in January and runs low in August and September. Select heads that are compact and heavy, with outer leaves that are deeply colored (green or red) and free from blemishes. The outer leaves may be loose and are usually discarded, since they are very tough. If the outer leaves are missing, the cabbage is not fresh, and will probably not be sweet enough to be eaten raw. When green cabbage turns white, it is old. Dark spots also indicate age. Cabbage should be light green (or red for that variety). The three varieties of cabbage are the common green variety, red cabbage, and green savoy cabbage, which has crinkly leaves. Red cabbage and savoy cabbage are usually more expensive, but we prefer a nice, sweet, fresh head of green cabbage. Although darker colored vegetables usually contain more nutrients, Dr. Vetrano says that green cabbage is of greater nutritional value than red cabbage. Avoid cabbages that have had the butt end excessively trimmed, because this causes dehydration. Do not eat bitter cabbage—it contains irritants.

**Carrots**

Available all year. Organically-grown carrots are often available through health food stores, but they are usually very large, overly mature carrots suitable for juicing, which is why the health food stores carry them. Young, tender carrots fresh from your garden are the best for eating raw. Carrots with the green tops still on are sometimes available in certain produce sections and, of course, they are fresh. Otherwise, select firm, smooth carrots with a good, rich, orange color. Avoid flabby or shriveled carrots, or those with large green areas. Good carrot taste comes from the bright orange area where sugar is stored. The nutritional value of the carrot makes it an important vegetable.

**Cauliflower**

Peak season is September through November, low May through August. Cauliflower is available all year, but its price and quality are better in season. Select compact to solid heads with white to creamy white clusters (and fresh green leaves, if they have not been removed). Cauliflower accumulates black smudges as it ages. If not too many, they can be scrubbed or cut off. Cauliflower eaten raw should be the freshest possible. If it is spotted, or the green leaves are getting dark and withered, it's old.

**Celery**

Available all year. Select crisp, thick, unblemished stalks with as many green leaves as possible. If the stalks are cracked or loose, don't buy them. Avoid limp, rusty celery. Celery is one of the best of the

salad vegetables, being succulent and juicy. Try to find celery that is medium green in color. If it is dark green, the taste is very strong, and if it is white (blanched), it is of low nutritional value.

**Celery Cabbage (Chinese Cabbage)**

Available all year. This is an excellent salad vegetable, if not too mature and tough. Select crisp, light green heads, with no wilted, yellow leaves.

**Chayote**

Occasionally available. This is a member of the squash family. It is light green, has white, juicy flesh, and is delicious eaten raw, like a cucumber. It is native to tropical America, but can be grown in gardens on the southeast coast, from South Carolina southward, and in southern California.

**Chinese Vegetables**

Various Chinese vegetables are available in some supermarkets. *Celery cabbage* (listed separately) is also known as *Chinese cabbage*. The *water chestnut* (also listed separately) is another Chinese vegetable. *Bok choy* and *suey choy* are quite frequently available. Bok choy looks a little like celery cabbage, but has very dark green, wide leaves at the top. Suey choy looks like a shorter, plumper version of celery cabbage. Neither of these is as good in the salad as some other vegetables, but they are popular for use in chop suey and give a wider variety of ingredients for vegetable chop suey. Young shoots of the *bamboo* plant are much like asparagus, but are seldom found fresh in this country except in areas with Chinese and Japanese populations. Other unfamiliar but excellent Oriental vegetables, such as *Arrowhead*, *water bamboo*, and unusual squashes, may be found near these communities. Chinese vegetables are interesting and nutritionally valuable additions to the menu.

**Chives**

A mild member of the onion family, perennial and hardy. Sometimes available in markets growing in pots. Hygienists do not recommend onions, which are irritants when eaten raw. Chives may be mild enough for occasional use by people with unimpaired digestions. Easy to grow in the garden. May be dug up, in the autumn, in small clumps, potted and kept growing in the house.

**Corn**

Peak season is May through September. Best months vary according to local season in your area. Don't buy corn out of season. Corn begins to lose its delicate, sweet flavor immediately after harvesting, and unless it is really fresh and in its prime, it will have tasteless, starchy kernels, instead of kernels filled with sugar-sweet milk. In fact, corn is considered a green vegetable when freshly picked, and converts its natural sugar to starch in only two hours, so that it then must be classified as starchy. When freshly picked, it is delicious raw. People who buy their corn in supermarkets rarely know the fine flavor of fresh corn, but, occasionally, I have been lucky enough to be on hand for a fresh shipment of sweet, tender corn which we could enjoy without cooking. Select corn with rich green tightly folded husks, and brown dry silk. The stem should not be dry or discolored. Pull down the leaves a bit to check the kernels, which should be plumb and milky, uniform in size and color, with no bare spots. If the kernels are large, the corn is usually tough. Small, delicate kernels are the tenderest. If the milk spurts from a pierced kernel, the corn is fresh and sweet. Don't buy ears of corn which have been husked; this causes the flavor and nutritional value to dissipate rapidly. Color varies from white to yellowish to yellow, and is not a reliable indication of quality.

**Cucumbers**

Available all year with a slight peak in May and June. If you buy cucumbers in season in your area, you will be more likely to find them unwaxed. The European or English cucumber is long and slender, has few seeds, and sometimes reaches a length of more than three feet. It is almost seedless because it is asexual, grown wholly in greenhouses. The common garden variety comes in many sizes and shapes. Small, young cucumbers are best for flavor and quality. Some supermarkets feature packages of fresh "pickling" cucumbers, which are unwaxed, small in size and contain small, tender seeds. Inspect these packages carefully; if you get them shortly after packing, before they have had a chance to deteriorate, they are excellent. If you must buy waxed cucumbers, select the smaller sizes, and be sure to peel them. Don't buy cucumbers which are beginning to turn yellow, or which have withered ends or mushy spots. Cucumbers are low in nutritional value, since they are more than 96% water, but they are good food, nevertheless, containing valuable nutrients, and are delightful additions to the salad, offsetting other more concentrated foods. Foods with high water content, like cucumbers and watermelon, help to comprise the water-sufficient Hygienic diet.

**Eggplant**

Available all year, with a slight peak in August. The tough skin of eggplant affords it some natural protection against chemical farming. Although the skin is edible, I usually peel eggplant, because it is often waxed. If it doesn't feel waxed, and you want to use the skin, scrub it as best you can. Select firm, bright, shiny, heavy eggplants with a uniform rich purple color, with no brown or bruised spots, or cracked or shriveled skin. Select small-sized eggplants whenever possible. The larger ones are apt to be over-mature, perhaps bitter, and containing large hard seeds that are best removed. Small, soft, light seeds are fine and add to the tastiness of this food. Some people use raw slices of eggplant as a sandwich with tomatoes, sprouts and other foods as a filler, but unless the eggplant is quite young and tender, with very tiny, soft seeds, it will probably be best cooked.

**Garlic**

Available all year. Members of the onion and garlic family are irritants when eaten raw, due to the presence of considerable amounts of mustard oil. Habitual use can impair the digestive system and weaken the organs of elimination.

Superstitions about the curative powers of garlic and onions are not based on fact. A great "purifying" process does occur when raw garlic and onions are eaten, which is a Herculean effort of the eliminating organs to get rid of the poisonous allicin and irritating mustard oil contained in these bulbs. Allicin is similar to digitalis, in that the body's reaction to the poison creates a stimulating effect to certain organs. Both of these substances get into the cells, tissues and blood. Since the body cannot make use of such poisonous substances, it calls upon the kidneys, lungs and liver to try to dispose of them, which abuses, overworks and impairs these organs. Garlic and onions are useful as companion plants in the garden to repel insects.

**Greens (other than lettuce)**

Available all year. It is advisable to avoid foods which contain harmful substances in significant amounts —for example, foods high in oxalic acid. This poisonous substance is a calcium antagonist, and forms crystals which may develop into gallstones or kidney stones in some individuals. Please don't interpret this information to mean that if the analysis of a plant reveals minute amounts of undesirable substances, it must be stricken from the dietary. If this were true, we would be left with few foods, since some minute amounts of such substances may be found in many good foods. For instance, some over-zealous researchers have been advising against the use of lettuce, because it has been found to contain microscopic amounts of a substance resembling laudanum, a sedative. Hygienists emphatically advise the use of dark green leaves, with the exception of those containing large amounts of oxalic acid or other

toxic substances. The dark green leaves of romaine, Bibb, Boston and leaf lettuce are excellent foods and should be used in substantial quantities. *Beet greens*, *spinach*, and *Swiss chard* are so high in oxalic acid that it is inadvisable to use them as food. Small immature leaves of spinach and beet greens are lower in oxalic acid, and a few may be used in the salad. Mature *mustard greens* contain large amounts of mustard oil, an irritant. Very small mustard green leaves may occasionally be used in the salad. *Watercress* is too strong and pungent to the taste. Dr. Vetrano says that it is probably due to the large amount of sulphur it contains. Any vegetable that is strong and has a pungent, unpalatable flavor is not eaten by Hygienists. The bitter and pungent taste is nature's way of warning against them.

Young, sweet *garden chicory*, *endive* and *escarole* are suitable for salads—when mature they are bitter and contain concentrated acids and irritants. *Sorrel* has edible leaves, but should not be used because it contains much free acid, especially oxalic acid. *Pokeweed* has young purple shoots, which resemble asparagus, and is used in salads by some people. It is high in oxalic acid; contains toxic substances, and should not be used. *Comfrey* does not form a part of the Hygienic diet because it has astringent qualities which occasion actions by the body to dispose of these substances. Any plant that occasions vital abnormal actions of the body (as does comfrey) is toxic and should not be used. It is well to be alert against the potential harmful effects of the so-called herbs, which are said to have "curing" properties. Hygienists do not accept the premise that certain plants have such properties. They believe that only the self-healing power of the body, and its continual efforts toward self-preservation, can help to restore health. If certain substances cause a reaction by the body, it is because the body acts to eliminate the threat of those substances. In 1978, the English organization which had been promoting comfrey sent out a warning, saying comfrey had been found to contain pyrrolizidine alkaloids, which possibly can cause liver cancer "if eaten over a long period of time." Dr. Vetrano has been warning about the poisonous alkaloids in comfrey for a long time. Hygienists use only foods which are pleasant-tasting and mild, which have no irritating properties, and do not cause the body to react in any way other than to digest and metabolize them. So which greens (other than lettuce) does that leave that are truly good and can be recommended whole-heartedly for use in salad? Small, tender leaves of broccoli and the small tender leaves of kale are the best. Collard, dandelion and turnip leaves are also excellent when sweet, tender and immature. The mature leaves of broccoli, kale, dandelion and turnip may be cooked. If not too mature, bitter or stringy, endive and escarole may also be cooked.

**Kohlrabi (turnip rooted cabbage)—sometimes available.**

This is grown as an annual spring and fall vegetable. It has a pale green or purple turnip-like swollen stem which grows just above the ground. It has a wonderful flavor when eaten raw and is excellent for salads. It may also be cooked.

**Leeks**

Peak season is September, November and in the spring. The taste is similar to that of onion—only milder and sweeter, more delicate and tender. The mature plant produces a stem two inches or more in diameter, and from ten to twelve inches tall, resembling a large, over-sized scallion. As with all members of the onion family it contains the irritant, mustard oil, and should not be eaten raw unless very mild and sweet. It is usually served cooked or used to flavor soups and stews. Select crisp, firm leeks with medium-sized necks and an even, light green color.

**Lettuce**

Peak season is March through August; available all year. *Iceberg lettuce* has a crisp texture, and the head is easier to wash than other leafy varieties that must be washed one leaf at a time. It is also the most-readily available, but it is certainly not the best. It lacks much taste, and is much lower in nutritional value than the varieties of lettuce which open to the sun's rays and produce dark green leaves. *Romaine (Cos) lettuce* has broad, tender dark green leaves and a loose head. *Butterhead lettuce*, including *Boston*

and *Bibb*, has soft, waxy-looking leaves, and is quite succulent. For those with impaired digestion, or chewing difficulties, butterhead lettuce has little fiber and is crisp and crunchy.

As an illustration of the greater nutritional value of romaine and butterhead over iceberg, consider the following figures:

| | Protein | Calcium | Iron | Potassium |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Romaine | 1.3% | 68 mgs. per 100 grams | 1.4 mgs. per 100 grams | 264 mgs. per 100 grams |
| Boston | 1.2% | 35 mgs. per 100 grams | 2.0 mgs. per 100 grams | 264 mgs. per 100 grams |
| Bibb | 1.2% | 35 mgs. per 100 grams | 2.0 mgs. per 100 grams | 264 mgs. per 100 grams |
| Iceberg | 0.9% | 20 mgs. Per 100grams | 0.5 mgs. per 100 grams | 175 mgs. per 100 grams |

Iceberg head lettuce has a few outer dark green leaves, which are usually discarded, and the blanched interiors are used, most of it pale, almost white. *Leaf lettuce* or any variety of *garden lettuce* is excellent. Even iceberg lettuce grown in home gardens is greener than that found in most stores, and all the outside leaves are used.

Select fresh looking lettuce with no rusty or wilted leaves and with a minimum of damaged edges. The softer the lettuce, the sooner it should be used. Buy butterhead or leaf lettuce for immediate use. Romaine will stay crisp longer. Several varieties of lettuce should be used, varying it from salad to salad, to insure more complete mineral intake. Lettuce should be used in generous quantities.

**Mushrooms**

Available all year with a peak season from March through May and a low July through September. Dr. Esser says that mushrooms are indigestible and generally pass through the digestive system unchanged, and although fairly rich in nutrients, little of them are usable. He says that mushrooms may be eaten, but there are many other true foods which are more deserving of a place on the menu than this edible fungus. If you use them as a novelty, or for the taste or flavor, select young (small to medium) mushrooms. The caps should be closed around the stem, and should be cream-colored or white. As the mushroom ages, the cap pulls away from the stem. Avoid wide open caps and dark "gills" (under the cap), those seriously pitted or discolored, and those with a spongy texture.

**Okra**

Peak season is June through September. Okra is grown and marketed primarily in the south. Small, young pods may be eaten raw, but some people find them unpleasant and "slimy." Various methods of cooking reduce or neutralize the sliminess, especially by combining with tomatoes. Select small, young green pods, free from blemishes and with tips that bend with very slight pressure. They should be under three inches long, preferably smaller. Avoid pale pods and tough pods with stiff ends. As okra begins to age, it turns yellow-white, then black.

**Onions**

Available all year, peak May through August. Ordinary yellow globe onions, which are mostly used for cooking, are quite uniform in quality. The outer, paper-like layers are thin on fresh onions, thicker on those from storage, but there isn't much difference otherwise. White onions fall into two categories—grano, which are round and granex, which tend to be flat. In general, the granos are hotter than the

granex. The larger Spanish onions (yellow or white-skinned) and Bermuda onions (purplish red) are milder and somewhat sweeter than other varieties, and are often used raw. However, as previously indicated, raw onions are irritating because of their content of mustard oil.

**Oyster plant: (See Salsify)**

**Parsley**

Available all year, slight peak October through December. Unless very young and sweet, parsley contains an excess of oxalic acid. It is usually as a garnish, but if young and sweet, it should be eaten since it is rich in nutrients. Select bright green, crisp leaves.

**Parsnips**

Peak season is October through April. This is really a winter vegetable, but is on the market throughout the year, generally waxed. I don't buy waxed parsnips, but watch for the unwaxed ones. This vegetable is usually not tasty and tender enough to be eaten raw, unless very young. Select small or medium-sized, well-shaped, firm parsnips, free of surface blemishes. Avoid large ones which can be tough and woody, and those that are flabby.

**Peas (Fresh)**

English green peas in the pod or black-eyed peas in the pod. Peak season is March through June. Small, young, fresh, bright green, recently harvested peas have the best and sweetest flavor. These will be delicious in the natural raw state, straight from the pod. Overripe peas have a flat, starchy taste, similar to raw peanuts. Select pods that are bright green and velvety to the touch. Be sure to check to see if they snap open easily. They should be well-filled without being swollen. Black-eyed peas in the pod are sometimes available, but are not popular because they are very difficult to hull. Can be eaten raw if young and fresh.

**Edible podded peas (snow peas)**

This is a gourmet treat, somewhat expensive to buy, but very easy to grow in the garden. Use when just barely mature—they are really delicious. Select bright green, unblemished peas whose green color has not begun to fade.

**Peppers, Sweet Bell (Green or Red) and Pimentos (red)**

Peppers are available all year, mostly green. Slight peak is June through September. Red sweet bell peppers are available intermittently, pimentos rarely. Although most of the sweet peppers on the market are green, those that are fully ripe, and much sweeter and more flavorful, have a bright red color. Buy sweet red bell peppers for immediate use since they deteriorate rapidly when red-ripe. Check carefully around the stem for softness and mold. Green peppers will keep longer. Peppers are frequently waxed. Peppers and pimentos are excellent salad vegetables and are high in Vitamins A and C. Select firm, bright, heavy, unblemished peppers with strong color and full, plump shape. Pimentos are squat-shaped, and when fully ripe, are even sweeter than ripe red bell peppers. Hot peppers, e.g., bananas, chili, jalapenos, are not recommended.

**Potatoes**

Available year round. "New" potatoes are small potatoes, freshly harvested and often not fully matured. The outer skin is very thin. A little peeling of the skin is normal and does not affect quality. New potatoes can be white or red (or dyed red). They are very tender, high in sugar and low in starch, and

spoil rather rapidly. "All-purpose" potatoes are used in various ways, while "baking" potatoes are considered most desirable for producing the best baked potato which is not mealy or dry. As potatoes age, the skin becomes thicker, more wrinkled and drier. A smooth skin indicates a freshly-dug potato; otherwise it has been stored. It is best to bake oval, brown-skinned potatoes from storage.

Look for firm, solid potatoes with no green areas. Green areas mean the potatoes have been exposed to sun while growing, or exposed to light too long. These green spots, as well as potato sprouts from the "eyes", contain solanine alkaloids which can cause a variety of symptoms, from mental confusion to cardiac depression. If the potato has very small green areas, they can be cut off, but if they are widespread, the potato will be bitter (and toxic!) and should be discarded.

As previously indicated, potatoes have sometimes been treated with sprout-retardant, so try to find organically-grown potatoes. Otherwise, do the best you can, selecting your potatoes in accordance with instructions previously given earlier in this lesson. It is better to buy "dirty" potatoes; pre-washed ones have lost some vitamins and absorbed some water. Besides, if they haven't been washed, they may not have been treated with sprout retardant.

Immature new potatoes from the home garden are a gourmet treat. White potatoes are not suitable for eating raw; the starch should be dextrinized by heating.

**Radishes, red or white**

Available all year, slight peak May through July. Unless young and sweet, radishes contain enough sulphur (similar to mustard oil) to irritate the digestive tract. Larger radishes are pungent in flavor and contain woody fiber which is difficult to digest and creates gas. When they are too hot to be eaten entirely alone, it is best to avoid them. People, with impaired digestions should avoid radishes altogether. If you use them, select medium-sized, firm radishes. Avoid large, flabby or spongy ones. Small red radishes may be sharper than the medium-sized.

**Rappini**

Available intermittently. Similar to broccoli, but much stronger in flavor. It grows in long, slender stalks. We prefer the milder flavor of broccoli.

**Rhubarb**

(Described under FRUIT—Lesson 24).

*(Note: The leaves are not used at all, as they contain large amounts of oxalic acid salts which may be fatally poisonous).*

**Rutabagas: (see turnips)**

**Salsify (Oyster plant)**

Sometimes available. The fleshy white roots resemble parsnips, and they taste is said to be reminiscent of the oyster. If the leaves are young and crisp, they may be eaten with the salad.

**Scallions**

Also called green onions. Pick in May. These are a special variety of hardy onions which do not form bulbs. If young and sweet, they may be used occasionally by people with good digestions. They are usually harvested when eight to ten inches high and half an inch thick. The outer leaves are peeled off and the inner leaves with the white stems are used. If you use them, select fresh firm scallions with bright green leaves.

**Squash**

**Summer Squash (Soft-shelled)**

Some forms available all year. Popular varieties include *green zucchini*, *yellow crookneck*, *yellow straightneck*, and greenish-white *pattypan* (scalloped cymling squash). The small, immature squash are tender and flavorful and are excellent in salads. All parts, including seeds and skin, are edible. Select those with good color, that are heavy for their size, with a rind soft enough to puncture with a fingernail. Buy for immediate use—they don't keep well. Avoid zucchini with damaged or black spots, and yellow squash that is starting to turn orange.

**Winter Squash (Hard-shelled, with flesh resembling sweet potatoes)**

Peak season is October and November. Popular varieties are *acorn* and *butternut*, available all year. There are many other varieties available during the winter season. Some are *buttercup*, *hubbard*, *delicious*, *banana*, *turban and spaghetti squash*. Select squash that is heavy for its size, with a tough, hard rind. These keep well for weeks.

**Sweet potatoes and yams**

Available year round, peak in November, low May through July. Yams are moist and sweet with a bright orange flesh. Regular sweet potatoes are paler, less moist, and less frequently available. Select small or medium-sized ones, without cracks or damp areas. They're best if they taper at both ends. Plump ones are the most moist. They should be firm, well-shaped, with a smooth, bright and evenly colored skin, and with no wax or artificial coloring. Shriveled discolored ends, sunken, discolored areas, and wet soft spots are signs of decay. Sweet potatoes and yams decay more rapidly than white potatoes and should be bought for use in the near future.

**Tomatoes**

Peak season June through August. Tomatoes are on the market all year, but most of them are not worth buying. The best tomatoes are generally the locally-grown varieties, which have matured and begun to ripen before picking. Tomatoes which show some red on the vine are mature. The poorest quality tomatoes are those which are picked green and ripened by ethylene gas; they are either hard or mushy, and tasteless. The crates and cartons in which such tomatoes are shipped are labeled vine-ripened, but the tomatoes are generally packed green as grass.

The skin of a good tomato is smooth, glossy and bright; the flesh is firm, but not hard. Vine-ripened tomatoes develop a deep-red color and a fresh tomato fragrance. When poor quality hothouse tomatoes are the only ones available, it is better to do without. If, on occasion, you just must have tomatoes, the hothouse varieties are better than the prepackaged hydroponic tomatoes. Hydroponic vegetables are grown without soil, using only water and chemicals. The resulting product should be avoided. Ripe tomatoes should be eaten as soon as possible. If you're selecting them to eat another day, select partially ripened tomatoes and finish the ripening at home. The small cherry or plum tomatoes are very perishable and should be used quickly. Some are highly acid, while others are almost sweet. Some are very juicy, while others are meaty and almost seedless. There are many varieties of tomatoes. The yellow and orange varieties are said to be less acid-tasting. I have never seen any white tomatoes, but I have read about them, and I understand they contain less acid than the other varieties.

**Turnips and rutabagas**

The most popular turnip has white skin with purple shading at the top. The flesh is white. When small, tender and fine-fleshed, they are suitable for use in salads. The tops are not usually available in markets; if occasionally available they are large and mature and not suitable for eating without cooking. The best

turnip roots and leaves are the young and tender ones, fresh from the garden. Turnips should be used sparingly, because they contain a large amount of sulphur. Rutabagas are large and white or yellow-fleshed (the yellow are more common). They are members of the turnip family, but have a sweeter taste. They are usually coated with paraffin, and are not usually eaten raw. Fresh sweet rutabagas, when available without the paraffin coating, would be fine in the salad. Select turnips that are small to medium in size; firm, smooth and fairly round. Select rutabagas that are not too large and are heavy for their size, firm and round to slightly elongated. Large turnips may be strong in flavor, and coarse, pithy and fibrous. Cooked rutabagas have a characteristic taste, a little strong, enjoyed by some, disliked by others. The larger rutabagas tend to be pulpy, quite strong, tougher and harder.

**Water chestnuts**

Available all year. Fresh water chestnuts are available in supermarkets, but very expensive. This is a delicious vegetable, with a soft, shell-like outer covering, and a sweet, white, crunchy flesh. Most people are familiar with the canned variety which is used in Chinese and Japanese cuisine. Canned water chestnuts have an unusual characteristic: they retain their crunchiness. We occasionally buy fresh water chestnuts. They sell for about $1.50 for a container of six to eight. They are each about the size of a macadamia nut, and after paring the black shell-like skin, they are even smaller. The sweet, crisp, juicy taste is a treat.

**Miscellaneous Vegetables**

Bags of cut-up vegetables are available in supermarkets for use in salads or chop suey. *Don't buy them*. Some contain preservatives; even if they don't, they are oxidizing, turning rusty and rapidly-losing freshness and nutritional value.

It is better to serve most salad vegetables without cutting them up in small pieces. For vegetable chop suey, cut up your vegetables as you need them. Enough nutritional value will be sacrificed in the cooking process, without starting out with limp ingredients.

I have seen sealed plastic bags of shelled black-eyed peas in water and vinegar. You will probably not be tempted to buy them, as they will most likely appear rather strange and unappetizing, just as they did to me. They are much worse than either frozen or canned black-eyed peas. As previously indicated, fresh black-eyed peas in the pod are sometimes available.



## 2. Storage Of Fresh Vegetables

Lettuce should be as fresh as possible. Of course the ideal would be to have lettuce picked fresh from the garden before the meal. If you are buying lettuce, get a three, or four days' supply, but wash only as needed. (If you don't want to wait to wash the lettuce at meal time, wash enough for a day or two and store in tightly closed pliofilm bags in your crisper. The stored lettuce should not be wet, nor totally dry. It will keep best if slightly moist.) Your unwashed supply of lettuce may also be stored in pliofilm bags in your crisper. The softer the lettuce, the sooner you should use it. Bibb, Boston and leaf lettuce wilt sooner than romaine.

If it is necessary to store lettuce for longer periods of time, a different method may be used. When we lived in Indianapolis, we ordered organically-grown lettuce from California in the winter once a month,

and we kept it fresh with very little deterioration for a week or longer, by storing in layers in the crisper drawer, covered by damp paper towels, watching and culling daily, and adding water to moisten the towels as they dried.

*Sweet red ripe bell peppers* and *cucumbers* are very perishable and don't keep well in bags. They tend to become slimy when bagged. I store them loose in the crisper drawer; they seem to last longer this way. Sweet green bell peppers last a little longer. I also store *tomatoes* loose in the crisper drawer.

Store *celery* or *celery cabbage* in pliofilm bags. Add a few drops of water to the bag. Don't buy more than you can use in three or four days.

*Broccoli* turns yellow in a few days. If very fresh when you get it, it may last an extra day or two. I have a very large-lidded plastic refrigerator storage box, which I find convenient for storing broccoli, *cauliflower*, *summer squash*, *brussels sprouts*, *eggplant*, etc. Always put summer squash, broccoli and eggplant on the top layer, since they are more fragile than other items. If you don't have such a box, use pliofilm bags.

*Cabbage* will stay fresh for a week or longer if stored in a pliofilm bag in your refrigerator.

For best quality *corn*, buy it the day you plan to eat it. If it must be stored, leave it in the husk, and put in a tightly-closed pliofilm bag; store it in the refrigerator.

*Eggplants* damage easily. Store in the refrigerator, but protect from bruising, as indicated previously. They will keep well for only a few days.

Store *peas* in pliofilm bags in the refrigerator; shell immediately before using. Use within a few days.

*Green beans* lose their bright green color and deteriorate rapidly. Store in a pliofilm bag in the refrigerator; use as soon as possible. The same applies to *wax beans*, *pole beans* and *Italian green beans*. They all deteriorate rapidly and should be used within a few days. If freshly picked, they may last a little longer—but if you are lucky enough to get freshly-picked beans in any of these varieties, you ought to eat them the same day, if possible, to take advantage of the freshly-picked flavor and optimal nutrition. And, since they are so fresh, you will be able to eat them without cooking.

*Globe artichokes* and *asparagus* deteriorate rapidly—use as soon as possible. Asparagus may be stored a day or two, fresh artichokes a little longer. If you must store asparagus, wrap the butt ends in a damp paper towel and place in a pliofilm bag in the refrigerator. Store artichokes in the refrigerator in a pliofilm bag.

*Jerusalem artichokes* will keep in the refrigerator in a pliofilm bag for about a week, sometimes longer.

*Okra* is quite perishable, but will keep for two or three days in a pliofilm bag in the refrigerator.

*Parsley* will stay green a few days in a pliofilm bag in the refrigerator.

*Fresh water chestnuts* are very perishable. If you buy these sweet, juicy, expensive treats, eat them right away.

*Fresh podded beans (cranberry beans, lima beans, etc.)* can be stored in the refrigerator in pliofilm bags for a few days, depending on how fresh they are. It might be better to remove them from the pods, where they tend to become slimy, if you must store them for several days.

The chayote will keep well for a week or more in the crisper drawer.

*Greens (kale, collards, etc.)* do not keep well and should be used quickly. They wilt and grow yellow. Store in pliofilm bags for two or three days.

*Kohlrabi* keeps well, like a root vegetable. Remove the tops and store in a pliofilm bag in the refrigerator.

*Mushrooms* are very perishable—it is best to use them within a day or two after purchasing; store in a pliofilm bag in the refrigerator.

*Potatoes*: Some experts on the storage of vegetables say that potatoes should be stored in a cool, dry place, but never in the refrigerator, although some of them do advise that freshly dug or new potatoes with thin skins keep best in the refrigerator.

The Department of Agriculture says that white potatoes will keep several months if stored in a cool, dark place with good ventilation at 45 to 50 degrees. Higher temperatures will cause shriveling and sprouting, and exposure to light will cause greening (evidence of the presence of solanine, a poisonous alkaloid). As previously indicated, don't buy potatoes with the "sunburned" spots. If potatoes are stored at below 40 degrees, they will dextrinize—that is, develop a sweet taste as starch changes to sugar, after which they will spoil rapidly. Cooking potatoes also serves to dextrinize the starch.

If you live in a warm climate—or for summer storage of potatoes or other root vegetables anywhere—where are you going to find a constant, dependable temperature of over 40 degrees and under 50 degrees? I have heard about root cellars for this type of storage, but, lacking a root cellar, my only solution is a refrigerator with the proper storage temperature. If I try to store them in my kitchen or on my patio, I lose them right away. My refrigerator preserves them very well. I store them in tightly-closed pliofilm bags.

*Sweet Potatoes, other root vegetables, miscellaneous*: Other root vegetables, such as carrots, turnips, rutabagas, and beets also keep best at around 40 degrees and a relatively high humidity—in the refrigerator, of course, in tightly-closed pliofilm bags. Be sure to cut the tops off your root vegetables before storing them, because the roots deteriorate as the greens wilt. If you set your refrigerator at about 42 degrees, it will be safe for all your food.

*Sweet potatoes and winter squash* are another matter—they require warmer, drier conditions, not lower than 50 degrees. It is best to keep them in a cool place in the kitchen or on the patio. Sweet potatoes will keep a few days to a week, hard-skinned winter squash a little longer.

*Summer squash* is quite perishable, but may be stored in the refrigerator in pliofilm bags for several days.



## 3. Purchasing And Storing Seeds For Sprouting And Ready-To-Eat Sprouts

*Alfalfa seeds*, *sunflower seeds*, *mung beans*, *soy beans* and *lentils* are the most popularly used for sprouting. They can be purchased from Jaffe or your health food store. Instructions for sprouting a variety of seeds and legumes will be given in Lesson 26.

Sprouting seeds may be stored in moisture proof containers for a long time.

It is best to sprout your own, but ready-to-eat sprouts are available in health food stores, most supermarkets, and (more and more, of late) on salad bars in restaurants.

In buying ready-to-eat sprouts, the key is freshness. Check to be sure they are crisp, not wet and slimy(thus fit only for the garbage). Good, fresh alfalfa sprouts are often available in plastic containers. Sometimes mung bean sprouts, or mixed sprouts, are also available. The alfalfa sprouts usually have the desirable green leaves; the mung beans usually do not. The mixed sprouts are not as good as individual varieties; first of all, when you sprout alfalfa, lentils, radishes, watercress, wheat and sunflower seeds together, some of them will be sprouted for too long a period for their variety, and some not long enough. (See Sprouting Instructions, Lesson 26). The mixture is also a bad one from the standpoint of food combining, and the radish and watercress sprouts are too strong, with too much irritating bite.

If you sprout your seeds at home, they may be stored in covered containers in the refrigerator for about

five days. If you buy your sprouts, be sure they are fresh and dry, and store them in your refrigerator, but don't count on their remaining in edible condition for longer than several days.



## 4. Selection And Storage Of Dried Grains And Legumes

Cooked grains and legumes may be used in the transitional diet but should be phased out as soon as possible. They are acid forming and difficult to digest.

A large variety of dried grains is available. Rice is the most popular but, unfortunately, most people use the bleached variety. Brown rice is of much greater nutritive value and does not contain poisonous bleach residues. It also is a better value, because a cup of raw brown rice will produce considerably more cooked rice by volume than will a cup of raw white rice. Long grain rice cooks up light and fluffy; medium grain rice is slightly more starchy and moist; short grain is even stickier.

Other whole grains are available (particularly in health food stores), such as millet, barley, wheat and rye. Triticale is a hybrid between wheat and rye. Cornmeal made from corn which has not been denatured is available in health food stores, but corn and other foods which have been ground into flour or meal are not recommended, because such products are subject to rapid rancidity.

Buckwheat groats are grouped with the grains, although not really a grain, and not a "wheat." They are actually the fruit, rather than the seed (as most grains are ) of the buckwheat plant.

Wild rice is the aristocrat of grains. It is very expensive. I watch for ads in *Organic Gardening* magazine and buy it directly from producers in Wisconsin or Minnesota. Wild rice is higher in protein than brown rice.

Brown rice is probably the best of the grains (except, possibly, wild rice) and is the staple article of food in the diet of more than half of the world's people.

But all grains are excessively acid-forming and require much time and energy for digestion. Wheat, rye and buckwheat may be sprouted and eaten raw. Lesson 26 will discuss methods of cooking the various dried grains.

Jaffe Brothers carries organic brown rice, organic millet, organic whole kernel wheat, organic whole kernel rye, organic whole kernel buckwheat for sprouting, organic buckwheat groats for cooking and organic popcorn (not high in nutritional value, but relatively harmless when unsalted and not buttered).

The variety of dried legumes is large. Beans: lima, white beans (marrow, great northern, navy, pea and peanut bean), kidney, pinto, garbanzo, cranberry, azuki, black turtle, fava. Soy and mung beans are not usually found in supermarkets, but are available in health food stores. Peas: whole or split green or yellow, black-eyed, chick peas (another name for garbanzo beans). Lentils are legumes which are similar to peas.

Organically-grown unfumigated green split peas, soy beans, mung beans and lentils are available from Jaffe Brothers.

It is better to use fresh beans and peas, when available, since they have an alkaline rather than an acid reaction. Fresh legumes are easier to digest than those that have been dried, and their nutrients are more easily assimilable by the human digestive system. Dried beans become more digestible when they are sprouted. Bean sprouts may be eaten raw. Lentils seem to be tolerated somewhat better than beans by most people, but it is best to use them sprouted and eat them raw. Lesson 26 will discuss methods of

cooking dried legumes.

Store grains in moisture-proof containers or bags in the refrigerator where they can be stored for a long time. It is never a good idea to store any food for longer than six months to a year. Buy supplies as available and needed and try not to buy more than you will use in a few months. Use grains intermittently, rather than regularly; their keeping qualities are an important factor, so that several varieties can be on hand.

We prefer to use fresh lima or cranberry beans, when they are available, and of course we use fresh peas in the pod regularly, and sometimes, fresh edible podded peas.



## 5. Bread—General Information

Bread is not recommended. Grain is not a Class A food, being difficult to digest, and causing "allergic" problems. Wheat, rye, barley and oats contain a substance called gluten, which is the source of many of these problems. The best way, to use grains is to sprout them and eat them raw. Wheat and rye berries and oat groats may be sprouted—the soaking and sprouting is said to neutralize the gluten, but some people still have problems with wheat and rye, even when sprouted. Oats seem to cause fewer problems, and rolled oats may be eaten raw.

Grain, ground into flour, and baked into bread along with other ingredients, including yeast and sweeteners, is not recommended. Some gluten-free breads are sometimes available, but, while these cause little or no "allergic" problems, they are still not the best food.

Oils: Eat your salads without dressings. We have been loving our salads "undressed" for many years and I make dressings only occasionally when we have guests, at which times we eat them also, and on the next day, gladly go back to our undressed salads. When I do make these salad dressings for my guests, I don't use any oil, but make them by combining, avocados with tomatoes or cucumbers. Recipes for such salad dressings will be included in Lesson 26.



## 6. Butter And Oil—General Information

Butter is sometimes used to a minimal extent by Hygienists who use cooked food, but it is not recommended. If you use all raw food, you will have no need for butter.

Vegetable oil margarine is hardened by hydrogenation (see definition), and many other ingredients are added to produce an imitation of butter, resulting in an artificial product that is difficult, or impossible, for the body to deal with efficiently. Nickel is used as a catalyst when hydrogenating oils, and traces of contamination with this metal remain to be ingested. Margarine is definitely not recommended, even for occasional use.

## 7. Sweeteners

These will be discussed in detail in a future lesson. For the purposes of this lesson about the proper selection of wholesome foods, it should suffice to say that no sweeteners are recommended, together with a very brief discussion of the contraindications.

The sweeteners are: brown sugar, "raw" sugar, white sugar, milk sugar, maple syrup, molasses, date sugar, cane syrup, corn syrup and honey.

If you are on an all raw food diet, you will have no need for any sweeteners.



## 8. Packaged, Frozen And Canned Foods—General Information And Storage

The Dole Pineapple Company published a booklet in 1976 called the "Shrewd Shopper's Produce Guide." It contains much valuable information about the selection and storage of fresh produce, but, even more interesting to Hygienists are some quotations from this booklet which indicate their understanding of the superiority of fresh foods (even though the Dole Company markets canned foods as well). The following quotations could have been written by a Hygienist:

"Fresh produce provides the major portion of essential water-soluble vitamins. These must be replenished daily. Fresh produce provides bulk and fiber to help clear blood vessels of cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease, and fresh produce helps keep bowels functioning normally.

"Nutritionally, there is rarely a question about the superiority of fresh over processed produce. The less a fruit or vegetable is changed, including over-washing, the more food value it retains. Yet we somehow think packaged foods are more convenient—in fact, just the opposite is the case.

"Convenience" refers to the time and energy spent in preparation. Since there is very little time spent preparing fresh produce in its more nutritious, best tasting, lushest form, it certainly is one of the most convenient food forms.

"Many Americans have no idea how rich, varied and delicious fresh vegetables can be, quickly steamed...or even crisp and raw.

"One drawback with frozen vegetables is their expense. Another is that improper blanching before packaging may destroy up to 50% of the Vitamin C in vegetables; cooking destroys even more. Also, packages usually call for salted water to bring out flavor. If salt is added to vegetables during cooking, juices that carry water-soluble vitamins (like Vitamin C), minerals, sugars and flavors are drawn from the vegetables. Which means you pay more for less flavor and nutrition.

"Canned vegetables lose much of their color when they are cooked in the canning process...Each time a vegetable is reheated, it loses more of its precious water-soluble vitamins and minerals.

"Compare the cost of a ten-pound bag of potatoes with freeze-dried, instant or frozen potatoes. You may pay up to eight times more for packaged potatoes which may have lost at least 50% of their Vitamin C. Processors 'enrich' their products, but can't duplicate valuable trace elements. Moreover, because no human nutritional quantity values have been established for trace elements, there are no guidelines. Which means fresh produce is even more essential."

The advice of the Dole Pineapple Company is clear. Buy and utilize fresh produce. That is also the advice given in this lesson, and the practice of all Hygienists.

It is not recommended that packaged, frozen or canned foods ever be used, but there are always the inevitable questions about exceptions and compromises, so let's deal with them here.

Sometimes even fresh produce comes pre-packaged. Although that is not the best way to buy produce, you may occasionally buy some of these pre-packaged items. Be sure to look at the dating code.

You might buy pre-packaged dried fruits, legumes, or grains in your health food store. Read the labels. Don't buy anything containing preservatives or chemicals—or anything you don't understand.

When buying any prepackaged item, be sure the package hasn't been tampered with, or broken open.

It is possible you might be tempted to buy frozen food in an emergency. Think well before doing so. Frozen foods may have been partially thawed and refrozen in shipping and handling. And what has been added? How will it taste, compared to fresh food? If you still want to consider buying it, *read the label*. You might change your mind.

If you ever do buy frozen food, select clean packages that have no signs of having been partially thawed and refrozen.

But always remember, any time you compromise and decide to use anything other than fresh food, you are doing it for some reason other than to provide the best nutrition. *Are you sure that is what you want?*

*Storage*: If you do ever use packaged, canned or frozen food, you will need to know where and for how long you may store them. Packaged foods should be stored according to directions given for the specific item involved, usually in the refrigerator, tightly covered or bagged to keep out moisture. The fewer packaged foods you use, the better.

Frozen foods must, of course, be stored in the freezer. It is best to buy no more than you will use in the immediate future. Frozen produce is not subject to as many dangers as frozen flesh foods, but there can still be deterioration and spoilage. The fewer frozen foods you use the better.

Canned goods will, of course, keep quite a while if properly processed and if the can is not bulging, rusted, dented or otherwise damaged. *If it is bulging, don't open it, don't taste it, don't even let the contents touch your hands. The bulge indicates botulism*.

Undamaged canned goods are said to keep almost indefinitely, but it is best to use them within six months to a year. Better yet is not to use canned goods at all.



## 9. Questions & Answers

**I have a large organic vegetable garden and several fruit trees. Every year I have a surplus of produce in season, and share with my friends and neighbors, but still, I always have much left over. I usually freeze my wonderful organically-grown figs, peaches and strawberries without any sweetening or heating, and we eat them just barely thawed. They are delicious that way. You don't approve of buying frozen foods which may be blanched, sweetened, or otherwise treated, but what do you think about these home-frozen fruits?**

> I do believe that this a good way to have some of your excellent organically-grown fruits out of season and, since there is so little loss of taste, it would be a shame to waste them. If they

are frozen quickly, immediately after picking, the vitamin loss would also be minimized. However, do not depend on your frozen fruit for your entire supply of fruit in any season. You should also use as many fresh fruits, of good quality, that you can incorporate into your diet, so that you will be sure to also get a good supply of whichever nutrients are damaged or lost by the freezing temperatures. Freezing, however, is less damaging than cooking.

**I have heard that foods which are members of the nightshade family should not be used.**

Tobacco is one member of the nightshade family. But a group of foods habitually used by Hygienists are also members of this family. These foods are white potatoes, tomatoes, bell peppers and eggplant. It is claimed that certain arthritics are "allergic" to these foods and experience remissions when they are omitted from their diet. It is also claimed, principally by advocates of macrobiotic vegetarianism, that these foods should not be used by anyone.

They advance the contention that all of these foods contain solanine (see definition). Hygienists agree with warnings against the use of potato sprouts or green areas on white potatoes, because of the concentration of solanine they contain, but not that the foods mentioned should not be used. Thousands of Hygienists do use these foods, and do not suffer with arthritis. We have used these foods frequently for many years, and we have no symptoms of arthritis or other disease.

If people who are suffering with arthritis wish to experiment with eliminating these foods from their diets for a period of time, there is no reason they cannot do so, as there is a plethora of other Hygienic foods from which to choose.

The macrobiotic diet is considered by Hygienists to be grossly inadequate, even dangerous. It consists principally of cooked grains, especially brown rice, with very small amounts of other foods. They favor the elimination of salads and fruits. They make the astounding declaration that the best diet would consist of 100% grain, but for those not eating all grain (probably no one actually does eat all grain), they allow sauteed vegetables and soup. They favor the use of salt and soy sauce, and, in spite of the thirst-producing diet of cooked food seasoned with salt and soy sauce, they recommend that very little water be taken, less than one-half pint daily.

Hygienists use very little water, since the Hygienic, mostly raw-food diet, without seasonings, is a water-sufficient diet. But it would be very difficult to abstain from drinking on the diet recommended by advocates of the macrobiotic diet.

**If I must choose between wilted, organically-grown lettuce, and fresh, crisp commercial lettuce, which is better?**

I really don't like to make such a choice, but would be inclined to say that probably the fresh, crisp commercial lettuce may taste better and have more nutritional value. If the wilted outer leaves of the organically-grown lettuce can be stripped off, exposing some green, crisp lettuce beneath it, that could be used. But if it is broken down all the way through, it is not much good.

## Article #1: Well! You Wanted To Know By V.V. Vetrano, B.S., D.C.

**Is using vinegar or lemon juice, and honey with salads, then eating it with a starch, a bad food combination?**

Yes. Starches and acids should not be mixed. The enzyme, salivary amylase (ptyalin) digests starches in an alkaline medium and for a very short time only in a neutral medium. It is quickly destroyed in an acid medium. Therefore, vinegar, which contains acetic acid, interferes with starch digestion because it inactivates salivary amylase.

The reason it is necessary to insure good digestion of food is because if it isn't digested, bacteria decompose it in the stomach and intestines with the formation of toxic products. Since bacteria are living cells, they form waste products and these are very toxic to humans. These, unfortunately, are absorbed in the small intestine and cause enervation. Not being useful nutrients, these toxic wastes must be expelled from the body at a great expenditure of nerve energy, thus producing enervation. The toxemia which ensues from enervation, which checks elimination, causes destruction of normal functioning tissues of the body. Disease is the result. In addition these waste products are irritants and cause gastritis which after many years may result in ulcers and finally cancer.

Lemon juice is an acid and also upsets or impairs starch digestion. Lemon juice is not a poison, however, and if you are not eating a protein or a starch you may indulge once in a while in a little unrefined oil with lemon juice on a salad. But, if you are eating either a starch or a protein with your salad don't indulge in a dressing. For more perfect digestion it is best to always eat salads without dressings of any kind.

Strict Hygienists never use oil. Oil is a fragmented food and never as wholesome as the whole food. The term "cold-pressed" should never be taken literally. It only means the first pressing, not that the food has not been heated. Foods are heated to extract the oil from them. Heated oils become carcinogens if heated long enough, and should never touch the delicate membranes of your gastrointestinal tract.

Oils have gone through many other processes also, such as dewinterizing, deodorizing, and detastizing. These processes are aimed at preventing the oil from solidifying in a cold temperature and to give them a bland tasteless flavor, supposedly "ideal" for cooking. The odor of the original food is also processed out of it for the same reason. After all these processes, oils are no longer fit foods for people.

Honey has a singular history. Hygienists don't use honey because it combines poorly with most foods and contains formic acid (a preservative secreted by the bee), which also impairs digestion and is poisonous. Honey is lacking in the minerals necessary for humans and will cause cavities almost as easily as white sugar, besides creating an acid condition if indulged in excessively.

Modern honeys are mass produced, as are many other of our food products, and because of this, quality suffers. Beekeepers have the tendency to pinch pennies as does everyone else in business, with no thought of the consumer. They purchase old leftover candies from candy manufacturers or other businesses, melt them down and feed them to their bees, including the preservatives, shellac, coloring agents, artificial flavorings and all other poisonous

chemicals that go into candy these days. The bees in turn produce a more toxic honey. They also eventually sicken and die and the beekeeper can't understand why. With or without all the poisons, honey is food for the bee, not for people. We must eat those foods which we were designed to eat or suffer disease and die prematurely.

When we learn to eat those things to which we are physiologically and anatomically adapted, instead of searching the heavens, the oceans, forests, rivers and streams for exotic delicacies of the palate, we will begin to glow with health. Instead of wasting time searching high and low for materials out of which to artificially prepare foods for the starving world, we should be planting our gardens and orchards to fulfill this great need.

Fruits, nuts, and vegetables are the foods to which we are anatomically and physiologically adapted, and which have minerals and vitamins in proportion one to the other to meet our special needs, and we don't make a mess of the ecological system by eating them. On the contrary, we are fulfilling our part in the ecological system by eating them. By staying with the foods to which we are constitutionally adapted, we also maintain the proper cycle of the elements. Honey is not among the foods that humans should eat.

Good food combining is not that difficult to learn. Study just a little every day and soon you will know how to make your own Hygienic menus wherever you go no matter what foods are available.

**Is the digestion of pasteurized milk difficult?**

Pasteurized milk can't be completely digested as can unpasteurized, so in that sense it is harder to digest and handle. The proteins in cooked milk coagulate, come to the surface, and form the skim with which you are familiar. Some protein is lost in the pasteurizing process, because some proteins coagulate. Coagulated protein is harder to digest than that which has not been hardened. Calcium and other minerals in pasteurized milk tend to form insoluble precipitates that are neither digestible nor absorbable, and therefore are lost to us as nutrients. With the idea of improving milk, toxic irradiated ergosterol is added. If you must have milk at least drink it unpasteurized, and take it alone.

**Why are the nutritious foods such as watercress, comfrey and parsley not included in the Hygienic diet?**

Any vegetable that is strong and has a pungent, unpalatable flavor is not eaten by Hygienists. Any substance that can't be enjoyed by the normal sense of taste is considered toxic. The normal taste buds don't appreciate these substances and warn us against such foods that have toxic substances in them. These bitter and pungent substances are not relished normally and it is Nature's way to cause us to avoid them.

Watercress is too strong and pungent to the taste and any vegetable which is that strong should not be used because of an excess of certain substances. It is thought that the sharp taste of watercress is due to the large amount of sulphur contained therein. An excess of sulphur in foods is not healthful.

Parsley is eaten by Hygienists but it is not eaten in excess because of the high quantity of oxalic acid it contains.

Sorrel is generally used in salads, but Hygienists avoid it because it contains much free acid; especially oxalic acid. It contains between three and four parts per thousand of oxalic acid.

Comfrey does not form a part of the Hygienic diet because it has astringent qualities which occasion wasteful vital actions designed to rid the body of the toxic substance. Comfrey is used as a healing agent by herbalists because of these properties. Any plant that occasions vital abnormal actions is toxic and should not be used.

**Do you approve of yogurt?**

Hygienists as a rule eat no yogurt. In order to make yogurt, milk has to be heated and this causes a precipitation of the minerals in the milk, rendering them insoluble and not absorbable. Consequently there is an objectionable loss of food value. Pasteurized and powdered milk is generally used for the commercial product, making it doubly poor food.

**What is poke-weed?**

Pokeweed *(Phytolacca americana)* is a tall herbaceous plant that grows wild in North America, mainly in the Southern States. The weed has juicy purple berries and a purple root, which is used in making some drugs. The young purple shoots, which resemble asparagus, are used by some people in the spring or early summer in salads; but they are high in oxalic acid. It is best to shun any plant used as a medicine, as it always contains toxic substances.

**The Hygienic system does not favor foods high in oxalic acid such as rhubarb, cranberries, chard, beet greens, and spinach. What actually is oxalic acid and how does it disrupt the digestion?**

Oxalic acid (C2h3O4) is an organic acid that is widely distributed throughout the vegetable kingdom. It is sometimes found combined with calcium in the form of an oxalate, instead of as a free acid. Sorrel, spinach, rhubarb, cacao, black tea and pepper contain from two to four parts per thousand in the fresh material. It was formerly thought that tomatoes were high in oxalic acid but they have been found to have less than .0005 parts per thousand. Their sour taste is due to citric acid. Cashew nuts also contain an appreciable amount of oxalic acid.

Calcium oxalate is found in the leaves of many plants that we eat, such as spinach, beet tops and swiss chard. It is also found in lichens. The oxalic acid from food will be circulated in the body in the form of a free acid or as a salt of the acid, usually a calcium salt. People in good health can oxidize the oxalic acid, that is, their bodies can break it down into carbon dioxide and water as it does other organic compounds. If metabolism is perverted by excess toxins in the body, then oxalic acid cannot be properly handled. In excess it interferes with digestion by inhibiting *enzymic* actions. If the oxalic acid is not broken down chemically before it reaches the kidneys, it may predispose to the development of calcium oxalate stones. Ragnar Berg, the Swedish biochemist states, "The amount of oxalic acid in cocoa and black tea is especially high and an over-indulgence in these drinks combined with an acid-forming diet, will greatly favor the formation, or the deposit, of urates and oxalates in the kidneys and bladder...All conditions that favor the increase of uric acid in the body, such as a high flesh diet, combined with demineralized foods, will also contribute to the formation of oxalates."

**What is uric acid and how do oxalic acid and uric acid differ?**

Oxalic acid is a natural acid found in foods. Uric acid is a decomposition product. It is an end-product of protein metabolism.

Since the body forms its own nucleic acids and the breakdown products of nucleic acids are purines which in turn are changed into uric acid, there will always be a certain amount of uric acid in the blood, but more than what the body will form itself can be hazardous, as uric acid tends to precipitate into stones.